

REMARKS

All examined claims were rejected under 35 USC 112, first paragraph, because the claimed process ranges of "15 to 25 psig" and "above 100 deg. C" were allegedly not originally disclosed. Applicant notes that the 100 deg. limitation was recited along with the pressure range, primarily to unambiguously confirm that the pressure range corresponds to conditions above the atmospheric boiling point of water (i.e., to define superatmospheric steam conditions). The forgoing amendment removes the temperature recitation, with applicant relying on the recitation of "saturated steam" along with the pressure range of 15-25 psig, to confirm that the conditioning (independent claim 29) and the conditioning and compression (independent claims 31 and 36) occur in a superatmospheric saturated steam environment.

In the Preliminary Amendment filed January 10, 2001 Applicant emphasized in the remarks, and gave an example in the paper submitted as Exhibit 5, that practitioners in the relevant field routinely use "psi" when referring to "psig". Moreover, contrary to the examiner's assertions, "psi" does not default to "psia"; rather, "psi" defaults to "psig" and in the exceptional circumstance when absolute pressure is of significance, the unit "psia" would be employed.

Nevertheless, the range of 10-25 psig and 15-25 psig appearing in applicant's claims is directly supported by the original specification, even without reliance on the convention that "psi" defaults to "psig" in the relevant field of endeavor. Applicant draws the examiner's attention to the following table (where values have been rounded):

Absolute Pressure	Gauge Pressure	Sat. Temp. (deg F)	Sat Temp. (deg. C)
10.0	-4.7	193	89.4
14.7	0.0	212	100
15.0	0.3	213	101
24.7	10.0	240	116
25.0	10.3	240	116
29.7	15.0	250	121
36.7	22.0	262	128
39.7	25.0	265	129

The examiner acknowledged that the original specification disclosed a temperature range of 90-150 deg. C, and the examiner further assumes that the disclosed range of 10 to 100 psi could be construed as absolute pressure. From the foregoing table, it can be seen that an absolute pressure range of 10-100 psia corresponds to a saturation temperature range of 89.4 to well over 129 deg. C. Similarly, a saturation temperature range of 90-150 deg. C would correspond to an absolute pressure range of about 10 to well over 39.7 psia. Applicant's claimed range of 15-25 psig (claims 29 and 31) corresponds to a saturated temperature range of about 121 to 129 deg. C. and the pressure range of 10-25 psig (claim 36) corresponds to a saturated temperature range of about 116 to 129 deg. C. Thus, the pressure ranges claimed in psig are within the range of the originally disclosed saturation temperatures.

Applicant also refers the examiner to page 17, line 14 through page 21, line 6. It is clear that the purpose of the discussion and associated Table A, is to show that Example 1 (pretreatment in a 22 psi and 128 deg. C saturated steam environment) produces noteworthy improvement relative to Comparative Example 1 (pretreatment in an atmospheric saturated steam environment). The pressure of 22 psi can only mean 22 psig, because only 22 psig corresponds to the specified saturation temperature of 128 deg. C in Table A.

This Table also addresses the examiner's assertion that no criticality has been shown regarding the "above 100 deg. C" limitation that appeared in the rejected claims. As noted above, the significance was in the emphasis of superatmospheric saturated steam conditions; this is also inherent in the claims as presented for reconsideration. The improvement attributable to the superatmospheric pretreatment environment of Example 1 relative to Comparative Example 1, is set forth starting on page 20, line 24. The significance is also demonstrated by the data and conclusions appearing in Exhibit 5 of the paper filed January 10, 2001, and the discussion in the remarks portion of that paper.

The examined claims were also rejected under 35 USC 103, based primarily on the Cederquist and Prusas patents. Applicant presented extensive arguments in the paper filed January 10, 2001 to distinguish the claimed invention from the cited references. In the outstanding official action, the examiner did not give weight to applicant's claimed range of 15-25 or 10-25 psig, and as a result the cited references were given greater

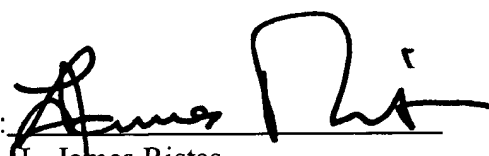
significance than what is warranted. Applicant requests that, in view of the evident overcoming of the rejection based on 35 USC 112, the examiner reconsider the arguments previously advanced by applicant during the personal interview and the subsequent paper, to distinguish the cited references, and allow all claims.

Applicant notes further that new dependent claim 38 has been added to define the preferred conditions of the RTS steps of the inventive method, as supported on page 12, line 5 of the specification.

A copy of the foregoing amendment in "clean" form follows the signature page.

Respectfully submitted,

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